

Eckhart Tolle - The Transformation Of Consciousness

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:18:05)

Eckhart Tolle, The Transformation of Consciousness, released by Pagoo, so let's look at some of the great mysteries of human existence. Things that adults don't look at anymore, don't ask questions about anymore, only children still do. But while we sit here and listen to the words, realize there is another dimension than the words.

And what is that dimension? One could say, simply to notice the silent spaces. While the words happen, you hear the words, but some of your attention is also on the silent spaces, or the silent background.

It's very simple, it's simple to notice that there is, apart from the words, that there is also a stillness here. And a strange thing happens when you notice silence, which means pay attention to silence, a strange thing happens inside you at that moment, and that is, in that act of noticing silence, thought activity, the stream of thinking, stops during that moment when you notice silence. Und für einen Moment kommt der Fluss von Gedanken zum Ende, während man lauscht, der Stille lauscht.

So this is accessing a new dimension of consciousness that most people are not aware of. The possibility for the stream of thinking to come to an end without any loss of consciousness. And in the moment of noticing or listening to that dimension of silence, you're also completely present here in this moment, completely inhabiting this moment, being in it totally.

And this is the reason why we are here, to access that dimension in ourselves, to go beyond the continuous stream of thinking that most people are completely identified with as themselves, me. The self, the me, is in every thought, no distance. And that is the state of absence.

And here we are entering the state of presence. Otherwise you're completely trapped in the conditioning of the thinking mind with all its patterns, with its accumulated knowledge, experiences, past. You are simply acting out a script in the mind when you're totally one with that.

This is no freedom in that whatsoever. So the possibility arises of living in a different state of consciousness from the normal state. So you will have noticed already that here, in this talk, your mind, thinking mind, is not being fed or stimulated.

And if you sit here, and you are still completely identified with the stream of thinking, you will already notice restlessness, impatience, and discontent arising. And the thinking mind says, what's he talking about? I can't figure out.

He's not really saying anything. Because the thinking mind and the sense of self that

comes with identification with the conditioned mind, a mind made sense of me, that sense of self is always looking for more to add to itself. So here it will be looking for some new ideas to put in here.

Oh, that's interesting. New beliefs. Now I know what I believe in.

Or maybe some new emotional experiences. And it's not being satisfied here because the thinking mind is not getting the food that it wants. That it wants to add to itself and then feel a little bit bigger when you leave here.

Added something to me. That's because the sense of self that is based on me and my story, my past, everybody's sense of identity, really, is what is it that people tell you when you ask them, who are you? Their identity.

They will give you the name. And they completely believe that that's who they are. They say it with great conviction.

This fact cannot be doubted that I am John Smith. Yes, I am. And then they will tell you what they do in relation to society, for a living.

And then if there's enough time left, they will tell you a little story. Or a long story. And that's the story of me.

And so the person will be talking about perhaps the roles that he or she plays in this world. And believing that that's who he or she is. I'm a mother of three.

I'm an accountant. I'm such and such. I'm unemployed.

I'm successful. I'm unemployed. They're little conceptual identities.

Concept in the head. Of course, everybody has certain roles to play in this life. But to believe that that's who you are, to be identified with that, that's a terrible prison, bondage.

You can honor the roles without believing that that's who you are. You can honor being a mother without this concept occupying your mind totally. Otherwise you will be a mother for the rest of your life, and your children will remain children to you.

And you always know better, and you'll tell them what to do. You are trapped in the role. And so the world is full of people who are trapped in the roles that society has given them, their conditioned roles.

Which is mindforms. That's what a role is, certain mindforms. Mental formations, thoughts.

So this is another aspect of being identified with the content of your mind. And that

sense of self, identity, me, that is derived from identification with that, is never at ease, or fulfilled, at peace, for very long. Not for long.

So that self lives in a condition of not enough. And there is a feeling attached to it that is, I am not complete yet. I haven't made it yet.

I haven't arrived home yet. I need to be more. I need to grow in my sense of self.

And everybody, even if on the surface it looks as if the story of me had completed itself, and sometimes this culture tells you that the famous people, or the wealthy people, they have made it on the surface. So there is the illusion that you can arrive at a state of completion of your sense of self that is based on a story. The happy ending.

And if you meet the famous people, or wealthy people, you realize their state is the same as everybody else's. They don't feel that they have arrived. There is fear, there is discontent, a sense of lack.

And they have everything. So this sounds like bad news. As if you couldn't possibly make it in this life.

Now if you have enough time left, then that sense of self will still feel, OK, I have enough time to complete myself. I surely have another 40, 50 years ahead of me, and surely that is enough time to complete the story of me, and make it into a happy one that ends happily. So it's not realized that the discontent, unhappiness, that problematic me that everybody knows at first hand, people don't realize that this is not their personal problem, but it is built into the very structure of the mind.

It is a structural dysfunction, not a dysfunction based on content. And every sense of self, with its story, knows that the story didn't quite work out the way it should have up to this point. Things along the way did not go the way they were supposed to go.

And so, at this moment, and there is the belief that through future I can still complete myself. And then as you get older, you realize it never seems, that moment of completion never comes. And then future shrinks as you get older.

And so what many old people do, as the future shrinks, more and more they look to the past. At least I can hang on to that. And they keep that going through thinking and talking about it.

Just keep it going. And if the identity is an unhappy one, the mind-made identity, because life has done such dreadful things to you, treated you so unfairly, that you have an identity that is based on complaining, that's fine, it's better than no identity at all. I have to keep that going.

So there are many people who are trapped in a very unhappy sense of self, with

continuous complaining in the mind about life, people around me, what they are doing to me, God, if there is a God, they believe in God. Or they say there can't possibly be a God, look at what he did. And once you are trapped in an identity, it becomes rigid, and you don't want to let go.

Through thinking and talking about yourself, to yourself and to others, you don't want to let go of the me. It doesn't matter how unhappy the me is. So if you have enough time, there is the search for more to complete me.

More possessions perhaps, maybe that would make me feel a little bit more secure, a little bit bigger, the bigger the car, maybe that would do it, it's bigger than other people's. And so the car becomes a thought form, it's not the car that really matters, because it's only metal, and in a few years it will be rust. It's not the car, it's the thought form of car that contains the self, and the me is in the thought form that identifies with the thought form of car, me, car, thought form.

And that is very normal. And if it's a big car, the me, the illusion of me has become a little bit bigger, through the thought form, for a little while. And after a little while, it doesn't work so well anymore as to satisfy the sense of self, it only works for a short period of time, and then you have to look for the next thing, that's the more.

And you look for the next thing, and this continuous looking for the next thing to complete me, is the psychological need, built into me, for the next moment, future. And everybody is looking for that, if you observe people, how they live, there's a need for the next moment, because it will enable me to get what I need to complete me. And then comes maybe the house, a big house, bigger than the car, and that's the thought form again arises, the me, the self is the thought form of my house, my.

My is a very interesting story, to say, mine. Children learn that very early on, one of the first things they learn, this is the beginning of the self, egoic self, that's mine. And so, an idea develops, and the whole civilization is based on that, the idea of owning something, ownership.

If you look at it clearly, you can see that to say, I own this, this table, whatever, this house, this car, it is mine, what does that mean? What? It's a story, you are telling yourself a story about this, it becomes a thought form.

Now, if you were mad, you might be telling yourself the story that, I own this huge office block, I own this 20 story office block, you walk past every day, and you say, that's mine. Now, and then it's possible that the rest of society may agree with your story, and they give you a piece of paper to show you that they agree with your story. So if you believe that you own something, and nobody else agrees with you, you're mad.

If everybody agrees with you, you're wealthy. Wealthy. And that wealthy is important

because it makes the story bigger, until it becomes unhappy again.

So to see how important the concepts are in the head, and so people live in and through a conceptualized sense of self, mental concepts, and the moment you inhabit a conceptualized sense of self, then you also inhabit a conceptualized reality, because everything that you perceive is interpreted according through the eyes of the mind-made self, the me. So that is the compulsion to immediately interpret and label every experience, every perception. And those people who are very good at that, those people who can quickly label things, analyze things, store information, regurgitate information, cut things into tiny pieces to examine, they're good with concepts, that is called intelligent.

And if you're very good at cutting the tiniest piece of knowledge into even smaller pieces, then you get a PhD. If you have been to universities, you know how tiny the segments are that people do their research on. So that is the human condition.

And the need for more is not only a personal need, because that sense of self becomes a collective sense of self, through companies, corporations, nations, tribes, organizations. They are all created by that conceptual self, and they are an expression of that, a collective expression of that. So it's easy to say you look at a huge corporation and see how greedy that corporation is.

Only recently, the famous collapse of Enron Corporation in the United States, huge. And then you see the entire corporation was dominated by the greed for more, more it wanted to grow, grow. They would do anything to grow.

So it's easy to say look at this evil corporation, it's just a magnified ego. And so this, the self, the entity, the self, when it moves through life, the me, has two important things that it is concerned about. One is the wanting movement, wanting more.

And the other is the protective movement of I don't want to lose anything that I already have, the little that I have. So those two movements are wanting and fearing, desire, fear. And human beings move between these two.

Whatever, any action undertaken by the egoic self is either desire, the need for more, or fear, the need for protecting me. And every human being that you meet in that state, the little self, looks to see what can I get, it's unconscious of course, what can I get from him or her to add to me? And then it looks, is this person a threat to me?

So it looks through the eyes of fear and desire at each person you meet. And so this is how human beings live. And one more thing that makes it even worse, that self, the mind-made self, needs to have a clear boundary, which is also thought of course, a boundary between me and the rest of the world and others.

And with that comes the need, unconscious again, for that sense of self to define itself

more strongly through opposition. The little self needs enemies somewhere, because without enemies, its sense of identity would no longer be rigid enough, it would become fluid. Collectively you can see it, how religions, nations, or different churches within the religions, tribes, how they love their enemies, they love them, not in the way that Jesus talks about it, they need their enemies because they define their sense of self, through that it becomes stronger.

Christians did this for a long, long time, some still do it. Muslims do it a lot these days, to define your sense of identity through having an enemy. This is not particular to any one religion, any religion lends itself to that.

Nations do it. Who would you be without the enemy that strengthens the illusory self enormously, to have, and on a personal level, that means the need for problems. So that's, again, it's unconscious, it's built into the structure of the mind.

So, we all know people who are attached to their problems, because it's always easier to see it in others than in oneself. And so many people's story-based self is mainly a collection of problems and conflict in my life. And when you ask them about their life, they will tell you their problems.

So if that is the human condition, personally, collectively, we can see why human history looks so insane, mad. Read 20th century history. It's a nightmare.

And if you watch TV tonight, the news, it's a continuation of that. So the world that human beings have created is an expression, a manifestation of their state of consciousness, rather unconsciousness. So now we can see why history is the way it's been ever since we started recording history.

So there is such a very strong element of dysfunction or madness in the human psyche. And all the great teachers, they saw that. Buddha, Jesus, Indian teachers from India, Hindu, they all saw that in the human condition there is an enormous dysfunction.

Buddhas called it suffering. The human condition is one of suffering, that's what he said. Jesus called it sin.

Of course it's been misinterpreted a lot. In India they call it illusion. So they saw that, and they also saw that there is a way beyond.

And a different state of consciousness is possible for humanity. Buddha calls it the end of suffering. Jesus calls it salvation or the kingdom of heaven.

Or in Indian teachings it may be called liberation or enlightenment. So at last we come to the good news. But you may have noticed sitting here and seeing the human condition, seeing it, just seeing it for what it is.

It is necessary because if there is no change in the human state of consciousness, the planet and humanity would probably not survive another 100 years. Because the dysfunction is now being magnified by the means of science and technology. And so for the first time humanity is faced with the possibility of bringing about its own extinction.

And so now a new state of consciousness has to arise in humans. And this is why it is arising. Now am I putting another idea into your head?

I don't want to put any ideas into your head. And some of you may ask, how do you know that a true change is happening? How do you know that?

This gathering here is part of that transformation of human consciousness. So this is what we are looking at now. The transformation of consciousness that is possible and is happening here.

Why? How? How do we get out of thousands and thousands of years of conditioning?

And the little self says, oh, this sounds very interesting. I want to become transformed. Yes.

And it says, tell me more and tell me how to get there. How do I get from here to there? In other words, another image forms in the mind of me attaining a state of consciousness, an ideal.

And so, okay, the big car didn't work, the big house didn't work, status in society didn't complete me, marriages didn't complete me, experiences, traveling, knowledge, Ph.D. But now, there's a possibility of attaining, of adding to me the ultimate attainment. And so you become a spiritual seeker. And don't realize that the same mindset with its need for more and need for future to complete me still operates.

And so after 20 years of seeking, you get a little tired. A few times you actually thought you found it, the great experience. And suddenly, it receded into the past.

And then you became somebody who once had a great experience. Better than nothing. You can talk about it, think about it, and feel unhappy about it.

And after a few years, that feels very familiar. So the self, the mind made self says, okay, well, tell me how to get there, no matter how much time it takes. In fact, give me time, and I'll get there.

And in some teachings, you get it, it feels good. The teachings say, there are 12 steps, and then you know exactly where you are. I'm at 4, where are you?

So in some teachings, you may have the 12 steps, and the only one who has attained 13 is the leader of the group. So the mind made self lives through time. Time is past, gives it its identity.

Future holds the possibility of completion, so it's time bound. And this is why that sense of self and time go together, that's why time is so important to us in this civilization. And time is a strange thing, it goes on and on, and yet the most common expression you hear about time is, I don't have it, not enough.

And there's so much everywhere, time. And time is a very strange mystery, a great mystery. On the one hand, it seems so real, nobody could deny it, because we are spending time here, you spend time coming here, and then very soon this will be over because time is passing.

And then, before you know it, you're going home again, time is passing. And you can't stop the thing, it drags you along, it's like you're sitting on an express train and it never stops, you see the landscape. Even our gathering here, for a long time it was a future event, there it was coming.

Another three days, two days, one day, and then it's here, and it goes... Was that it? The express train is gone, it's gone into the past, the future approaches slowly, the more distant the more slowly, just like space.

The more distant, the slower, and then suddenly it comes, and before you know it, it's gone. It's so fleeting, before you know it, it's gone. It's strange.

There was a, I believe a poet, talked about time as a fire that consumes us all. And, in a way, this is true, because what fire leaves behind is ashes, and that will remain of these bodies, burnt by time. At Christmas I visited old friends I hadn't seen in many, many years, and when I saw them at first, I thought they must be ill.

And then I realized, no, it's time did that. This is terrible, time did that to you, I didn't say that. So it's a very strange thing, time.

It seems we can't get out of it, but on the other hand we never have enough of it. It consumes us, okay. But then there's something else, and that's strange.

Time really is past and future. That's time. That's time.

Now the strange thing is, you never actually really encounter past or future, ever. So the strange thing is, all there ever is, is now. It's always now.

And the strange thing is that nothing ever happened to you, you never did anything or experienced anything in the past. Whatever ever happened to you must have happened in the now. And as the future never comes, of course, because when it comes, it's now.

And so we can see even when we remember the past. What you remember is a memory trace that you are giving attention to now. You can only remember it now.

And what you remember, the event, the thought form that happened in the now. So the

memory must have happened in the now and you can only remember it now, so you can't get away from now. And so we realize the strange thing that actually there is, ultimately, there is no past and no future in your life.

The future is what you project now. So there is no life apart from now. So it's strange that on the one hand, time seems to be so powerful, but on the other hand, this is not philosophy, it's too simple.

Philosophy would be more complicated. We'll keep it simple. Time seems so real and seems to do things to us.

And yet, if you look closely, you can't find it. You can't find it. All you ever find is this moment.

So what it does to the body, if time is ultimately not real, maybe the body is ultimately not real. Maybe both are aspects of the same illusion. But this we will now put aside.

To realize that your entire life unfolds in the space of now, never was not now, never will be not now. And the strange thing is, when people are trapped in their egoic, mind-made identity, all they are interested in is past and future. In other words, they're interested in everything except what is real.

And they miss this almost continuously. And so the present moment, at best, becomes a stepping stone that enables me to get to the next moment. And very often, I'm trying to get away from this now.

I resist it, I don't like it. I'm on my way to somewhere much more important. It's the next moment where I'm going to find myself.

So we come to the, there's a little, an opening now. At first it seems very small. The opening is out of the conditioned mind.

Freedom from thousands of years of conditioning through accessing the power that lies hidden in the present moment. The transformation of consciousness that is happening is simply, one could say, finding a new relationship towards now. A new relationship with now.

And a new... Eine neue innere Einstellung. Zum jetzt.

It is somewhere. Somewhere. I mentioned the need of the mind-made self for problems and enemies.

And one could say the greatest enemy of the mind-made self is the now. People don't realize that they have made the now into an enemy. And the transformation of consciousness is not something that could happen to you at some point in the future.

The transformation of consciousness is simply aligning yourself internally with this moment. And you can only do that now. Is it possible to live in such a way so that you welcome this moment, the only moment there ever is.

It's always this moment. There's only one ever. It's this one.

You welcome this now, no matter what form this now takes. Now the little me in the head says, No. I don't even like this now.

I want to get away from it. It's not completing me. It's actually stopping me.

It's an obstacle to where I want to get to. An obstacle to the story of me. That's what the now is.

This now, the little me says, is actually sabotaging my life, my story. That's why I need to get to the next moment. And that is a structural dysfunction to live in such a way that the now is continuously resisted.

The possibility now arises to bring a yes to this moment. Because it is. Because it always is as it is.

And you can scream and shout and complain, but it still is as it is. Now the little self says, yes, but I want to improve the world. I want to make the world a better place.

But this moment is dreadful. I don't want to accept this dreadful thing. And so you run away.

Run away from this. What happens? What happens?

It's enormous to recognize that the form that this moment takes, the form that it takes, of course, changes continuously. There's the field of now, and there's a form that appears in it. And then it disappears.

But really, it remains as the field of now. It disappears, the mind projects past to accommodate what's just happened. But really, everything is in this place of now.

It comes into the now. So there's only one moment, one now. It never leaves you.

Not many moments. Many forms that this moment can take. And what form this moment takes, whatever happens, is not a separate event.

There are no separate events. We know from ancient teachings and from modern physics that everything is interconnected. There are no separate entities or events.

And that means what appears in the now, what happens in the now, is an expression of the totality. And that means it could not be otherwise. The entire cosmos has brought this about.

So that is the inevitability of the form that this moment takes. When you recognize the inevitability of it, then you see the madness of resisting that. And what the resistance does, it strengthens the me entity.

It strengthens the illusion. And that's why the little me loves to make the now into its enemy. When you see that, the possibility of living in a different way arises.

And internally, you align yourself with now. And that means you allow this moment to be as it is. The Buddha used the word suchness, the suchness of things.

And the little me says, no, nothing is ever going to change. You will get stuck in this dreadful now for the rest of your life. And it doesn't realize that it's been stuck in its own mind patterns all your life.

When you allow this moment to be, you say yes to it. Yes. That yes is the end of thousands and thousands of years of collective conditioning.

The no to now, the reaction, the reactive no to this moment, to the form that this moment takes, strengthens the psychological form of me. And with a yes, no matter what form this takes, you bring a yes to it. And a strange thing happens.

There's suddenly, one could say, a space around what happens. And also inner space arises, a sense of spaciousness. And that is the arising of the unconditioned consciousness.

And there is vast intelligence in that unconditioned consciousness. The conditioned consciousness is the human mind. Which is a small aspect of that vast one intelligence.

So, something happens. It may be a challenge that comes into your life. Life does that.

It happens in the field of now. And it is not resisted, but simply given attention. You look at it.

And it arises, and you simply allow a flow of attention. You look. And this is an enormous change, the ability to simply be there with what is, in that state of alert attention.

And in that state of alert attention, enormous intelligence operates. And if action is needed, action will happen. And it will come not out of resistance, but out of the intelligence that is that state of alert awareness.

It often happens also that suddenly an external factor may come in to do what is required in that situation. A synchronistic event, for example. You are connected now with the one intelligence which is not confined to your brain.

So you can meet life in that state of welcoming whatever happens. Even if on the surface it looks bad. It could not be otherwise.

You cannot argue with is, so you might as well welcome it. But are there not everywhere dreadful situations in life, injustices, violence, people doing dreadful things to other people? Are you asking me not to do anything about it?

See what happens if you are there as the space of unconditioned intelligence. Go into a situation as not a little entity that is fighting and unhappy and angry and wants to create a better world out of its anger. And what see, the true transformed world can only arise out of the transformed state of consciousness.

So this is the only thing for us here to realize as we sit here, the possibility of meeting whatever happens in now in a state of yes. Yes. And that suddenly the portal is open and the unconditioned intelligence moves through you and begins to operate in your life.

You are now being lived by life. And then you can walk around, you can look at something and allow it to be so completely that the compulsion to label it mentally isn't there anymore. So you are not trapped anymore in the labels, concepts, thoughts.

This is the awakening out of the dream of thought. Not that thought does not happen anymore, but it is recognized as thought. You see it for what it is.

The seeing is the unconditioned consciousness. We can point to it here through words, but the true teaching is to sense the space out of which the words come. Some of you have studied Zen.

What is Zen all about? This. An uncompromising refusal to leave now, except for practical matters.

Tomorrow I will meet at such and such a time. Okay. Back now.

There was a Zen teacher who when asked what is the meaning of Zen, some teachers would hit you or some teachers give nonsensical explanations, but there was one teacher who became famous because all he would ever do was raise his finger when he was asked, Can you explain Zen to us, please? Yes. Oh, now the last secret.

The secret of now is to sense the now directly. Not as what happens in it, but as the underlying field. And then you realize that the now isn't really separate from who you are.

Because you are that field of aware presence. And some people have used different words to describe it. It is simply beingness, presence, I am, I am, but no longer this or that.

And that's God's self-definition in the Bible somewhere. They ask, Who are you? What's your name?

God says, I am as I am. I am that I am. So that, this is the essence of being.

So your identity is no longer the little story, but that field. So your spiritual practice is simply to bring a yes to this, to the now. And many times the old no will come back, the wave of resistance to what is.

What do you do then? You notice it and say, oh, there's a no. As a space of alert, aware presence.

And you still remember your roles and your past. After this, it's just a continuous stepping out when you get drawn back into the concepts, this conceptual self. And you notice it, you become unhappy, suffering.

And you become unhappy, you've lost the now. Oh, where's the now? My past, my future.

And then suddenly your attention goes, phew. Oh. And there isn't actually a problem here, is there?

And then you lose yourself again and it sucks up your attention, that thing here. So it's a continuous back and that, oh. And so increasingly you walk on this narrow, this edge of now.

Beautiful.